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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETTC](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARY ON IRAN, FROZEN
CONFLICTS, NATO, UKRAINE, BOEING, SUKHOI SANCTIONS

REF: MOSCOW 10382

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Summary: In a September 18 meeting, Russian Security Council Secretary Ivanov briefed on his September meetings in Spain with Iranian Security Council Secretary Larijani, UNSYG Annan, and former President Gonzales; raised concerns over mixed messages to Iran; and reiterated Russia's willingness to move to economic sanctions and speak with one voice with the EU 3. Ivanov underscored the reasons, however, why the GOR would not support a move to military action. He analyzed divisions within Iran and argued the absence of a ME peace process played into the hands of Iranian radicals. Ivanov expressed disappointment with Georgian negotiating tactics and concern over the prospect of military escalation and NATO Intensified Dialogue. Ivanov ridiculed a GOR-Transnistria union and urged Moldova to follow on the Transnistrian referendum by negotiating with "President" Smirnov. Ivanov welcomed the decline in polemics with Ukraine. On U.S. relations, he termed the Sukhoi/Rosoboron sanctions "punishment" for GOR arms sales to Venezuela and Syria, and said that U.S. allegations were without basis. Ivanov repudiated his Deputy's interjection that a Boeing commercial aircraft sale would be tied to resolution of the sanctions. He noted his intent to call NSA Hadley to discuss Iran and other bilateral issues. End Summary

12. (C) In an hour-plus meeting on September 18, Russian Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov briefed the Ambassador on his holiday diplomacy in Madrid, where he had an informal session with Iranian Security Council Secretary Larijani and UNSYG Annan, a separate two-hour discussion with former Spanish President Gonzales, in addition to other (unspecified) consultations with Iranians and Iranian watchers. Ivanov's notetaker was newly appointed Security Council Deputy Secretary Vladimir Pavlovich Nazarov, who comes to the Security Council via a long tenure in the security services.

Iran: Sanctions, strategy and speaking with one voice

13. (C) Ivanov opened the meeting by noting his concern over the competing and not always coordinated voices reaching the Iranian government. He was puzzled by Gonzales' decision to travel to Iran on a "personal" initiative, which did not even reflect a policy consensus of the Spanish government. It was critical, he emphasized, that everyone coordinate through EU High Representative Solana; this was a key factor in Ivanov's decision to abstain from meeting Larijani one-on-one, rather than with UNSYG Annan. The Italians and Spanish were searching for a role, with the Japanese also tempted. Ivanov's message to Gonzales was that this was a "dangerous and delicate game" that did not require outside players, but rather subtlety and a consistent message. Citing the

confusion of the Spanish Ambassador (in Madrid for Larijani's meeting) over the international community's approach to the suspension of uranium enrichment activity, Ivanov warned that the Iranians would profit from discrepancies within the international community.

14. (C) One factor contributing to Larijani's wavering in the negotiations, Ivanov argued, was his lack of understanding over who Solana represented and the extent of his mandate. A second factor was internal differences within the Iranian government, which Solana told Ivanov was the reason behind the postponement of the September 14 meeting. The virtue of drawing out the dialogue with the Iranians, Ivanov maintained, was that it led to nuances within the ruling circles in Iran and a better understanding of the international community's position. Larijani understood better than those he represented what were the possible consequences of Iranian inaction; prolonged dialogue helped Larijani bring others around within the government, while simultaneously revealing publicly the differences between competing actors. Ivanov's assessment was that Larijani was not resisting a solution: "he is ready." The sequencing and setting were critical; "we have to help" the Iranians square our demand for a halt to enrichment activity beforehand with their offer to suspend during the negotiations. Larijani was a good interlocutor, Ivanov added, since he enjoyed high political standing at home and had direct connections to the Supreme Leader.

15. (C) Ivanov agreed with the Ambassador that it was Iran's turn to be responsive, and noted Solana's guarded telephone assessment that some forward movement had been achieved. Ivanov repeated that it would be difficult for Iran to change its position, having staked out such an uncompromising public

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line. In the event there was movement, Ivanov floated the possibility of a UNSYG-chaired informal session on the margins of UNGA modeled on the six-plus-two process for Afghanistan, which could provide a useful beginning to U.S.-Iranian engagement. The Ambassador reiterated that a suspension of enrichment remained a necessary precondition for moving to direct engagement, formal or informal, with the Iranians. He also repeated that, in the absence of an Iranian decision to suspend, it was essential to move toward a sanctions resolution in New York, as Russia had earlier agreed.

16. (C) Ivanov underscored that the GOR would not move toward support for military action against Iran, but remained committed to the negotiating process, the prospect of economic sanctions, and the necessity of speaking with one voice. He repeated GOR concerns that preparation for sanctions developed its own logic and rhythm and incited the worst in the Iranian government, which had received conflicting signals from ad hoc actors and had drawn its own conclusions about U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq. Sanctions were the easiest approach, Ivanov insisted, but lacked an endgame, and seemed certain to drive Iran away from the negotiating table. While Ivanov planned to call Larijani soon to underscore EU 3 disappointment with the Iranian response and to underscore that Russia is prepared to move to sanctions, the GOR would approach imposing sanctions carefully. This was not, he insisted, a function of Russian economic interests. Italy, Japan, and Europe writ large would suffer more from economic sanctions than Russia, with Ivanov describing any losses from Bushehr as "minimal." Russia's policy was not driven primarily by economic concerns, but by pragmatic concerns over the destabilizing effect of sanctions, perhaps leading to military action against Iran, on Russian interests in the Caucasus, Middle East, and North Korea. Before Russia advanced to the next stage, it needed to know the final destination. In this context, Ivanov drew attention to Israeli vulnerability to a missile attack, lacking even basic ABM defenses against an Iranian reprisal.

¶7. (C) Ivanov noted differences between GOR and U.S. assessments over the time frame within which Iran could acquire nuclear weapons, underscoring the difficulties that Iran had faced with the cascade technology. He accepted the Ambassador's point that it was difficult to ascertain whether technical difficulties, Iranian disinformation or a political decision to "go slow" were at play, but reasserted that Iran was not going to have nuclear weapons "tomorrow."

¶8. (C) Ivanov made a final pitch for sustained U.S. engagement, acknowledging that it was both difficult and frustrating, but stating that the process had not played itself out. Characterizing the last UNSC resolution as "transitional," Ivanov said a subsequent resolution could remove the question of Iran from the IAEA entirely. The Ambassador stressed that it was incumbent on the Iranians to do something on suspension, in order to open the door to further talks, and the U.S. looked to Russia for assistance in reaffirming that message. Ivanov accepted the Ambassador's point that success with Iran was important to U.S.-Russian relations and agreed that the U.S. had demonstrated significant restraint in responding to Iranian statements and acts. Ivanov reiterated that "on principle, there is no disagreement; there are differences of prognosis and timing." Russia will continue with the U.S. "until it can't." What was important was that when Larijani's aide Hossein-i Tosh came to Moscow he heard a coordinated message: Russia was speaking with one voice to Iran, and reinforcing to Larijani that Solana was the voice of the EU 3.

Middle East: peace process as antidote to Iran

¶9. (C) Ivanov warned that Larijani's negotiating posture reflected the general consensus within Iran that the U.S. and Israel were weakened by the wars in Iraq and Lebanon. This played into the hands of the extremists, particularly in the absence of any successful peace process in the Middle East. Noting FM Lavrov's visit to the Middle East (reftel), Ivanov underscored the GOR's conclusion that PM Olmert needed a negotiating process to offset the damage inflicted upon him domestically by the war in Lebanon. Olmert had told Lavrov that he was serious about negotiations with the Palestinians, but only after the Israeli soldier was returned. The Ambassador agreed that Lebanon appeared to foreclose, at least for now, the option of unilateral withdrawal to Olmert, but noted the constraints on Abbas dictated by disarray within Palestinian circles. Ivanov argued that the Arab League-driven ministerial at UNGA could politically

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jump-start serious discussions, particularly given disquiet within the Arab world over the stalemate, at a time of Iranian ascendancy.

Georgia: Situation Unsettling

¶10. (C) After a deep breath and long pause, Ivanov said he was offended by Georgian government behavior and saw little reason to be optimistic about prospects for success in the bilateral relationship or over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. To the contrary, the GOR feared the possibility of an escalation. Ivanov conceded that Russia had made its share of mistakes, and had its faction of hot heads who exacerbated relations. While Ivanov counseled pragmatism and face-to-face negotiations, he expressed frustration over Saakashvili's quest for any diplomatic route that avoided Russia. Ivanov judged inclusion of the frozen conflicts on the UNGA agenda by a 16-15 vote a mistake that reflected GUAM naiveté over the significance of internationalizing an internal dispute. Russia sat at the negotiating table with Georgia and tried to proceed methodically, but Georgia was

always looking over its shoulder for someone else with whom to talk. GOG assertions that they had no negotiating partners were contradicted by repeated offers from the parties to engage. Georgia's search for alternate negotiating partners took it away from the realities of the negotiating table.

¶11. (C) Ivanov questioned the value of introducing "Congolese or Bangladeshi troops" into the fray as international peacekeepers in the separatist regions. "Georgia cannot impose a final status, it must negotiate one with the parties involved." The GOR increasingly was convinced that the GOG was preparing for war, maybe as a scare tactic, but "maybe because they have become accustomed to this option." Such an action, he warned, would not be "profitable" -- "Georgia cannot win militarily." Ivanov predicted further complications introduced by the November 12 referendum in South Ossetia, which the Russians could not stop. It would take place at a "difficult moment," since the JCC presently was stalled. There needed to be a long-term solution built on the basis of trust.

¶12. (C) Ivanov complained that all positive Russian steps were pocketed, whether on Ajaria, the closure of Russian bases, the facilitation of those refugees who wanted to return, the work on reopening the railroad from Sochi to Tbilisi, and assistance on energy (sic). This track record was ignored. What Russia was not prepared to do was to "smother" Abkhazia or South Ossetia: these were Georgian problems, Georgian issues. However, if Georgia started a military action, "it would be hard to stop the people from our territory" from becoming involved in the fighting. The atmosphere, Ivanov repeated, was unsettling and any incident, even trivial, could lead to an outbreak of hostilities. "That's why we need the JCC." Ivanov said that no matter how difficult, Georgia would need to negotiate with the breakaway provinces.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador responded that an outbreak of hostilities would be a disaster for all parties concerned and urged Russia to intervene with its South Ossetian interlocutors to underscore the danger of firing upon Georgian helicopters, noting that a U.S. Senate delegation had been on a similar helicopter on the same basic flight path a week before the latest firing incident. Ivanov agreed that these actions were unacceptable, and that Russia had a responsibility to urge the South Ossetians to use their heads.

Georgia: NATO ID

¶14. (C) Ivanov stated that he did not understand the attraction of NATO for Georgia, since it would complicate matters and compound the lack of trust. At the same time, Ivanov warned mildly, a step toward NATO, such as Intensified Dialogue, would make Russia's relations with NATO more difficult. Accepting Georgia was purely political, not strategic in nature, he maintained, and -- unlike Central Europe -- could hardly be justified by geography. While NATO announced that it would not establish bases in Georgia, the fact of the NATO relationship would reduce Russia's abilities in the region. The Caucasus factored squarely in the Kremlin calculations over security, given its intimate connection to stability in the North Caucasus and interconnections to the Middle East.

¶15. (C) Just as a Socialist-led Spain joined NATO in order

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to preclude a return to Francoism, Georgia's embrace of NATO was designed to provide a military shield against Russia. Was it really in NATO's interest to get involved, Ivanov asked, questioning the stability and reliability of the Georgian regime. By bringing NATO and Russia into conflict, the ability of the international community to fight terrorism

would be negatively affected. While 9/11 precipitated unparalleled cooperation, Iraq and other events had eroded this relationship. Putting Georgia on a membership track in NATO would hasten this process. The Ambassador responded that the Alliance would move deliberately and transparently: it sought to deepen relations with both Georgia and Russia, on their own terms.

Transnistria Referendum is a reminder

¶16. (C) Whether or not the referendum in Transnistria was legal, Ivanov noted, "it exists." While Russia would not recognize the referendum, he insisted that it was a reminder to Moldova that it needed to negotiate with someone, even Smirnov. Ivanov ridiculed the notion of Transnistria being absorbed into Russia. Maybe it could become a part of Ukraine, he observed, but the specter of a Russia-Transnistria union was akin to Yugoslavia grafting on to Belarus. The referendum was effective in measuring the mood of the population and demonstrating that the breakaway enclave did not share the political view of Chisinau. Ivanov urged Moldova to use the referendum to inform its own negotiating position with the Transnistrian leadership, and not just the OSCE, EU, UN, or U.S. Ivanov complained that President Voronov brought nothing new to his meeting with Putin. "He came, talked, left, but what comes next?" Ivanov posed. If the Kozak plan was unacceptable, the GOM needed to put forward other proposals. In contrast to South Ossetia, where plans were a dime a dozen, there was a dearth of initiatives in Chisinau and Tiraspol. Ivanov welcomed the subsiding of tensions over the customs union.

Ukraine: Move away from polemics

¶17. (C) Ivanov noted that the GOR is ready to meet at a high level with Ukraine, and is waiting for the Intergovernmental Commissions to commence, chaired by Presidents Putin and Yushchenko. The Security Council was to serve as the Secretariat, but Ivanov was unclear with whom he would be working on the Ukrainian side. There would be an array of working groups, including on the Black Sea fleet, with PM Fradkov chairing economic cooperation. Both governments were avoiding sharp polemics, and attempting to create a better atmosphere for discussions. Yanukovich, he predicted, would be able to accomplish a lot after a six month hiatus of governing in Kiev. On gas, the dialogue continued, but the reality of new Turkmen gas deal meant that Ukraine would confront a price hike.

Boeing/Sukhoi Sanctions: U.S. punishment for GOR arms sales

¶18. (C) Ivanov raised Boeing, noting the signing of the titanium deal, and asking the Ambassador for an update on the commercial aircraft negotiations. The Ambassador noted that Boeing would likely soon be compelled by the press of other prospective buyers to sell the 787's that it had reserved for Russia, pushing back a possible delivery date from 2010 to ¶2012. He urged the GOR to keep the door open. In a whispered aside, NSC Deputy Nazarov linked the Boeing sale to the sanctions imposed on Sukhoi and Rosoboron export, with Ivanov responding that he was not aware of any direct linkage between the commercial aircraft deal and the resolution of the sanctions.

¶19. (C) The Ambassador briefed Ivanov on his meeting with Sukhoi, reiterating that the U.S. was prepared to review the sanctions if there were new GOR information and assurances, and noting that a Sukhoi executive had accompanied Deputy FM Kislyak to his meeting with U/S Joseph. Nazarov interjected that the GOR believed the U.S. should review the case unilaterally; it was inappropriate for Sukhoi to provide the USG with assurances, which was the preserve of the MFA.

¶20. (C) Ivanov noted "in all frankness," that the GOR assessment was that sanctions were imposed as retribution for Russian sales to Venezuela and Syria, as a "political signal and warning" to Sukhoi over its contracts with Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The GOR had carefully reviewed the U.S. non-paper and the actions of Rosoboron and Sukhoi.

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There was nothing to the U.S. allegations. In the past, there were instances of leakage to the Iran, of abuse of Russian export laws; however, that was not the case in this instance. Rosoboron had no dealings with Iran: it was a government organ and the GOR knew with precision what was the scope of its activities. "We know what it did and did not do and there were no violations," Ivanov repeated. The result, he said, was a poisoning of the atmosphere: U.S. actions were not partner-like and had a bearing on other aspects of the U.S.-Russia strategic relationship. It was difficult for Russia to build a relationship with the United States and to adopt a long-term perspective to strategic cooperation when, at any moment, the U.S. could withdraw and impose sanctions.

¶21. (C) The Ambassador denied any political calculation to the sanctions and reaffirmed that the U.S. wanted good relations with Sukhoi. The U.S. was prepared to review any new GOR information and assurances. Navarov characterized the exchange between Deputy FM Kislyak and U/S Joseph as unproductive: the U.S. expected a written GOR submission, the GOR believed the onus was on the U.S. to correct the mistaken application of sanctions.

¶22. (C) Ivanov noted that he planned to call NSA Hadley later this week to touch bases on Iran and discuss the status of relations more broadly.

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